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## **OLR Bill Analysis**

**sHB 5467 (as amended by House "A")\***

### ***AN ACT CREATING A WORKFORCE TO MAKE IMPROVEMENTS AROUND CONNECTICUT'S PUBLIC AIRPORTS***

#### **SUMMARY:**

Current law authorizes several initiatives for preserving the state's licensed, privately-owned airports that have paved runways and conduct at least 5,000 operations per year. The initiatives include establishing an airport zoning category for Federal Aviation Administration- (FAA) defined "imaginary surfaces," areas that extend upward and outward from runways where obstructions deemed hazardous to navigation are prohibited.

This bill adds to these initiatives the requirement that noise mitigation programs be established in those neighborhoods where noise levels exceed applicable FAA standards and that the programs be funded with available federal dollars. The bill allows the programs to be combined with energy conservation programs.

The bill also requires the Department of Transportation (DOT) to set aside at least 30% of the noise mitigation projects or contracts for veterans who served during wars. DOT must do this in consultation with the Labor and Veteran Affairs departments. It can award the contracts to veterans meeting the bill's eligibility criteria or to businesses that employ them.

Veterans qualify for a set-aside contract based on the length of time spent in the service, minus the time spent training. A veteran qualifies if he or she (1) served in a time of war for at least 90 days or the entire war if it lasted less than 90 days; veterans who served for shorter time periods qualify only if they were separated from service due to a disability connected to their service and (2) has been certified in

weatherization and insulation techniques through a program funded under the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

\*House Amendment "A" eliminates the provisions in the underlying bill requiring environmental assessments and environmental compatibility planning in the airport zones and replaces them with the provisions authorizing noise reduction and energy conservation programs in airport neighborhoods.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2012

## **BACKGROUND**

### ***Private Airport Preservation Initiatives***

Besides establishing an airport zoning category for FAA-defined imaginary surfaces, the law:

1. gives the state a right of first refusal to purchase, for fair market value, any airport solely to preserve it if threatened with sale or closure;
2. authorizes the Department of Transportation to acquire an airport's development rights for fair market value as long as the airport remains open to the public; and
3. authorizes 90% state funding for eligible capital improvements at private airports, as determined by the transportation commissioner.

## **COMMITTEE ACTION**

### Commerce Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 17 Nay 0 (03/27/2012)

### Appropriations Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 52 Nay 0 (04/23/2012)

### Transportation Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 30 Nay 0 (04/30/2012)

Environment Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 22 Nay 2 (05/03/2012)